CLAIMS

We claim:

1	1. A method of operating an autostainer device, said method
2	comprising the steps of:
3	accepting a slide tray, said slide tray having at least one specimen slide and a
4	reagent pack associated with said specimen slide, said reagent pack
5	comprising a first identifier that specifies a particular slide preparation
6	protocol;
7	reading said first identifier from said reagent pack; and
8	preparing said specimen slide according to said particular slide preparation
9	protocol.
1	2. The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said reagent pack is
2	associated with said specimen slide by being adjacent to said specimen slide.

The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said reagent pack is associated with said specimen slide by having a second identifier on said specimen slide that is the same as said first identifier.

1	4. The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said reagent pack
2	comprises a set of wells, each well containing a reagent needed for said particular slide
3	preparation protocol.
1	5. The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said reagent pack
2	comprises a peel-off identifier, said peel-off identifier for placement on said specimen
3	slide.
1	6. A method of operating an autostainer device, said method
2	comprising the steps of:
3	accepting a slide tray, said slide tray having at least one specimen slide and a
4	reagent pack associated with said specimen slide, said specimen slide
5	comprising a first identifier that specifies a particular slide preparation
6	protocol for said specimen slide;
7	reading said first identifier; and
8	preparing said specimen slide according to said particular slide preparation
9	protocol.

7. The method as claimed in claim 6 wherein said reagent pack is associated with said specimen slide by being adjacent to said specimen slide.

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1	8. The method as claimed in claim 6 wherein said reagent pack is
2	associated with said specimen slide by having a second identifier that is the same as said
3	first identifier.
1	9. The method as claimed in claim 6 wherein said reagent pack
2	comprises a set of wells, each well containing a reagent needed for said particular slide
3	preparation protocol.
1	10. The method as claimed in claim 6 wherein said reagent pack
2	comprises a peel-off identifier containing said first identifier, said peel-off identifier for
3	placement on said specimen slide.
1	11. An apparatus for staining specimen slides, said apparatus
2	comprising:
3	more than one slide tray, said slide tray for holding more than one specimen slide;
4	an automatic staining head assembly, said automatic staining head assembly for
5	depositing reagents on said specimen slides, said automatic staining head
6	assembly further comprising an input device for reading identifiers that

specify slide preparation protocols to perform;

8	a control system, said control system coupled to said automatic staining head
9	assembly for controlling said automatic staining head assembly to prepare said
10	specimen slides during a staining run;
11	a pause input, said pause input for pausing said apparatus during said staining run;
12	and
13	a restart input, said restart input for restarting said apparatus after adding new
14	specimen slides onto on of said slide trays;
15	wherein said control system causes said automatic staining head assembly to read a new
16	set of identifiers associated with said new specimen slides to add said new specimen
17	slides to said staining run.
1 2	12. The apparatus as claimed in claim 11 wherein said apparatus further comprises reagent packs.
1	13. The apparatus as claimed in claim 12 wherein each said reagent
2	pack comprises a set of wells, each well containing a reagent needed for said particular
3	slide preparation protocol.
1	14. The apparatus as claimed in claim 12 wherein said identifiers
2	comprise a barcode on each said reagent pack.

	1	15. The apparatus as claimed in claim 11 wherein said identifiers
	2	comprise a set of barcodes on said specimen slides.
	1	16. The apparatus as claimed in claim 11 further comprising:
	2	a STAT restart input, said STAT restart input for restarting said apparatus after
D	3	adding new specimen slides onto on of said slide trays wherein said new
	4	specimen slides are given high priority;
The court and the true was the true to the	1	17. A slide rack for a slide staining apparatus, said slide rack
75 75 142	2	comprising:
•	3	a first receptacle for accepting a specimen slide; and
	4	a second receptacle for accepting a reagent pack, said reagent pack containing at
::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::	5	least one reagent needed to prepare said specimen slide.
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	1	18. The slide rack as claimed in claim 17 further wherein said reagen
	2	pack further comprises an identifier that identifies a slide preparation protocol for said
	3	specimen slide.
	1	19. The slide rack as claimed in claim 17 further wherein said first
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receptacle and said second receptacle are adjacent to each other.

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1	20. A reagent pack for a slide staining apparatus, said reagent pack
2	comprising:
3	a set of wells, said well containing reagents for a specific slide preparation
4	protocol; and
5	an identifier, said identifier associated with said slide preparation protocol.

- 1 21. The reagent pack as claimed in claim 20 wherein said identifier 2 comprises a peel-off sticker for placement on an associated specimen slide.
- The reagent pack as claimed in claim 20 further wherein said identifier comprises a peel-off sticker for placement on an associated specimen slide.
 - 23. A slide staining apparatus, said apparatus comprising:

 at least one slide rack for holding a slide specimen to be prepared; and
 a tiltable sink assembly, said tiltable sink assembly having a first drain hole on a
 first side such that liquid material drains through said first drain hole when
 tilted down on said first side, said tiltable sink assembly having a second drain
 hole on a second side such that liquid material drains through said second
 drain hole when tilted down on said second side.

1	24. The apparatus as claimed in claim 23 wherein said first drain hole
2	is coupled to a sewage system.
1	25. The apparatus as claimed in claim 23 wherein said second drain
2	hole is coupled to a hazardous waste container.
1	26. The apparatus as claimed in claim 23 wherein said second drain
2	hole is coupled to a corrugated tube.
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1	27. An apparatus for staining specimen slides, said apparatus
2	comprising:
3	at least one slide tray, said slide tray for holding at least one specimen slide and
4	an associated reagent pack, said associated reagent pack having reagents
5	needed for processing said specimen slide; and
6	an automatic staining head assembly, said automatic staining head assembly for
7	obtaining said reagents from said associated reagent pack and depositing
8	reagents on said specimen slide.

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